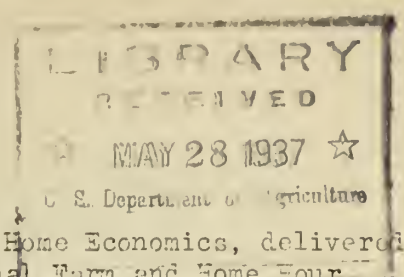


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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR
Eating for the Future



A radio talk by Dr. Louise Stanley, Bureau of Home Economics, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Thursday, May 6, 1937.

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This first week in May is the week when we stop and take a look ahead for children - our own children and the children of the nation. This year it is especially significant. For in designating May first Child Health Day the President called upon the people of the United States to consider and appraise child health conditions and the community organization for child health. He urged also that we plan for health protection for every child during the coming year.

The Department of Agriculture with its research specialists and its far-flung extension service is eager to do its part. We stand ready to help on the question of food, so that children may have the protection that food affords. We want to see children grow sturdy and strong, full of life and vitality. And we want to help you feed them so they can enjoy the extra years which come from good nutrition.

So I have asked to come and review with you some of the results of recent nutrition studies which may help you in doing this. Dr. Henry C. Sherman of Columbia University, one of the outstanding nutritionists in the world, in a recent interview tells in a very interesting way how he has applied the results of his animal studies to human nutrition. He feels sure that by proper feeding you may not only add years to the life of your children but life to their years.

Doctor Sherman has a stock of rats which he has bred for 40 generations. So he knows the feeding history of the ancestors of the animals now in his laboratory. By very slight changes in the diet the descendants of animals whose life span hitherto had averaged 587 days, was increased on an average of 63 days. A gain of 10 percent.

Too bad some of us cannot be Methuselahs so as to try this out on human animals. But Dr. Sherman and other nutritionists feel sure the application can be made - that in the same way better feeding of the human animal can add 10 percent to the life span. In other words the Biblical three score years and ten may become three score years and seventeen.

Dr. Sherman's first diet for his rats was "adequate." That is, the animals were fairly healthy and able to produce offspring. But by adding to this diet and making it what he calls an "optimal" diet, he increased the life span and gave them a longer period in the prime of life. This optimal diet of Dr. Sherman's is the same thing we call a grade A diet. And what puts it in this top class is the use of generous quantities of the "protective" foods - milk, fruits, and vegetables, in addition to the other kinds.

Also, in a recent statement, Dr. Sherman calls attention to the fact that two important essentials of an adequate diet, vitamin A and calcium, can be stored. He emphasizes that children may not only be fed to supply the day to day need, but by a reasonable excess may be helped to store these essentials for future emergencies. This, Dr. Sherman thinks, accounts for the reason some children came through the depression without more marks of serious malnutrition.

So what I want to do today is to tell you something about this grade A diet. I'm going to outline briefly some of the ways in which you can get into the diet of your children these protective foods and so help add increased years to their life and life to their years.

Milk comes first in importance - milk in all forms: fresh, whole, condensed, evaporated, and dried. Remember, however, that important as milk is it must not be allowed to replace other essential foods. Children cannot live on milk alone. Some meat or eggs each day, tomatoes or a citrus fruit, and vegetables, especially the green leafy and the yellow ones, are important. Do not let the punster or the food faddist keep you off spinach. It is a good vegetable and most children like it. Whether this is the result of "Popeye" on the radio and screen or whether mothers have learned to cook it better, I'm not prepared to say. But I do know that children like it. So if you find that getting too much of the milk in fluid form tends to fill up the youngsters and keep them from eating some of the other foods you know they should have, try the nursery school expedient of not giving the milk until some of the other foods have disappeared. You may even delay it until the last of the meal. But be sure both the milk and the other foods do disappear. And after all, if this is taken as something to be expected and if there is not too much fuss about it, and if the child lives a normal, active, outdoor life, appetite will help prevent food problems.

Give the child the right foods, at the right time, in the right amounts. Let him know he is expected to eat what is put on his plate and in most cases it will disappear quickly. But look out for sweets between meals. Give them as a reward at the end of the meal. Child psychologists may not agree with rewards, but this is a natural one because that is where sweets belong.

We do need to worry about the children in families whose incomes will not stretch to buy adequate amounts of milk and fresh vegetables. We were given a new appreciation of how low cost diets could be improved by the addition of dried skim milk in a study of three- and four-year children recently completed here in Washington.

Two hundred thirteen children three and four years of age were studied. The children were selected from low income families who normally used very little milk. It was found that their diets at the beginning of the study were very inadequate. They had a low amount and poor quality of protein. They were low in calcium, phosphorus, iron, vitamins B and G, and in most cases vitamin A. The children, as a result, were retarded in stature, with below average chest measures.

These children were given dried skim milk for a four month period. Then three or four ounces of dried skim milk were added each day to these low

grade diets they came to be more than adequate in every requirement except iron and vitamin A. If we had had a free hand, we could have worked out a diet, even at low cost, with enough iron and vitamin A as well as the calcium and other food substances supplied by the dried skim milk.

And speaking of some of these economic aspects of the food question, Dr. Hazel Stiebeling of our Bureau is making a very careful analysis of family food expenditures to find just where the money goes. She finds that as expenditures for food increase there is not only an increase in the amount of all foods purchased but it is especially marked for eggs, meats, milk, butter, and green vegetables and fruits. This means that increasing expenditures for foods result in more food in general, and in foods richer in high quality proteins, minerals, and vitamins, so a higher wage level should mean better food and better children.

But she goes on to point out that high cost for food is not necessarily a guarantee of high quality diets. In fact, some families at the lower expenditure levels managed to get grade A diets, though some had B diets and others only measured up to grade C. But, what was in a way more surprising, some of the families in the higher expenditure groups had grade C diets. All of which goes to show that while it is easier with plenty of money to spend to get the right kind of food, it is just as necessary to exercise care in selecting it if you are to get the right kind of diet from the standpoint of nutrition.

So all of us who have children in our families have this responsibility about their food. No matter whether we have little or much to spend, we can select the kind of diet that pays dividends in good nutrition. By choosing and giving to the child the right kind of food we can help him build for the future and lay by reserves to take him through periods when food may be more difficult to get. Or when there may be illnesses which interfere with his use of certain foods. This will help him to obtain that extra seven years which Dr. Sherman says is the reward for the optimal diet.

(Bulletins offered: Farmers' Bulletin No. 1674, "Food for Children." Leaflet 42, "Good Food Habits for Children." Mimeograph: How to Use Dry Skim Milk.)

